

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts**

**May 12, 2015**

**9:30 AM**

### **Two Hundred and Ninety-Fourth Meeting**

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In Attendance: Mr. David Rowlett, President; Mr. Shane Wells, Vice-President; Mr. Allan Bryant, Secretary-Treasurer; Mr. Kevin Jeffries; Mr. Orville Bennett; Mr. Lenville Martin; Mr. Bobbie Wilson; Mr. Rod Murphy; Mr. Ted Jessup; Mr. David Cowherd; Ms. Betty Barrick, KACD Auxiliary; Commissioner Steve Hohmann, DNR; Deputy Commissioner Sandy Gruzesky, DNR; Assistant State Conservationist Reed Cripps, NRCS; Mr. Bob Finch, FSA; and Ms. Faye Brown, FSA.

Also in Attendance were the following KY DOC employees: Director Kim Richardson; Assistant Director Johnna McHugh; and Mr. Jeffrey Reed.

Quorum was met.

**Meeting Called to Order** - at 9:30 am by KACD President David Rowlett.

**KACD Minutes of the Last Meeting - March 10, 2015** - Mr. Kevin Jeffries made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Orville Bennett seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

**Treasurer's Report** - Treasurer Allan Bryant presented the KACD Treasurer's Report with copies given. Mr. Bryant made the motion to approve the report as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. David Cowherd. **Motion carried.**

**KACD Correspondence** - President David Rowlett presented the report and began by stating that two (2) letters had been received. The first was from the Sand County Foundation thanking KACD for the one thousand dollar (\$1,000) donation in support of the Leopold Award. President Rowlett interjected that eight (8) applications were received for this year's Leopold Award and that of these eight (8) three (3) have been selected for an onsite visit, from which a winner will be chosen and announced at the upcoming KACD Convention. The second letter, also sent as an expression of gratitude, was from the FFA Foundation for KACD's one thousand dollar (\$1,000) donation in support of their program. Mr. Kevin Jeffries added that a card from NACD's newly installed CEO, Jeremy Peters, was received in appreciation for KACD's two hundred and fifty dollar (\$250) contribution for the legislative fund auction item.

**NACD Director's Report** - Mr. Kevin Jeffries presented the report. The NACD Summer Board Meeting will be held in Spokane, WA on July 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Jeffries presented to the board the cost of registration (\$250), round trip airfare (\$700 to \$800), and three (3) nights lodging (\$159 per night x 3 nights = \$477), for an approximated total of one thousand five hundred and twenty-seven dollars (\$1,527) to attend this meeting. Treasurer Allan Bryant moved to approve this expenditure. Vice-President Shane Wells seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

The Southeast Regional NACD Convention will be held August 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Garden Inn in Tupelo, MS. Mr. Jeffries advised anyone who plans on attending to make their hotel reservations as soon as possible due to the limited number of rooms still available.

Submit all NACD Hall of Fame nominations to Ms. Phyllis Vandiver for the southeast meeting.

Upon Mr. Jeffries inquiry President Rowlett asked if any conservation district would be willing to volunteer to give a presentation at the SE NACD Convention in Tupelo, MS. Mr. Rod Murphy stated that the Caldwell - Lyon County Districts would be willing to present their soil health presentation. Mr. Kevin Jeffries made the motion to pay the travel expenses for the district employees who will be participating in the presentation. Mr. Ted Jessup seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Jeffries requested that our state representatives be contacted and urged to support the concurrent resolution, "The Year of the Soil." He will make available all of the contact information to those who are interested. When questioned, Mr. Jeffries stated that it is his understanding that none of our representatives have signed this resolution as of yet.

Three weeks ago the announcement was made that Mr. Jeremy Peters would be the new CEO of NACD.

Mr. Jeffries asked for names to be submitted who would fit the designation, "Soil Health Champions." NACD is hoping to get a national network of one hundred and fifty (150) names that merit this title by being promoters of soil health. Director Kim Richardson, DOC, stated that she has been in conversation with Mr. Steve Blanford about this and has just recently sent out a mass e-mail suggesting that a list of names of all the farmers who have participated in the recently offered soil health forums be submitted. Ms. Richardson added that as soon as the list is finalized she would submit it to NACD.

Lastly, Mr. Jeffries announced that he has been appointed to serve on the Farm Bill Task Force Committee.

**KACD Auxiliary Report** - Ms. Betty Barrick presented the report. The fourteen (14) lost posters have been found and returned back to their respective counties. Ms. Barrick reminded the board that since winners could not be determined this year she made the decision to award each child who participated a ten dollar (\$10) cash prize.

Ms. Phyllis Lacy is continuing to fill-in as the interim treasurer until the convention. Ms. Barrick asked for the names of anyone who might be interested in serving as treasurer. She added that the term auxiliary means "support." Therefore the auxiliary is not just for ladies but is open to everyone. She also asked that board members encourage their spouses to stop by the auxiliary table during the convention to better understand what the auxiliary actually does and is all about.

A meeting was held on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> to determine this year's scholarship winners. The recipients will be announced on the final day (Tuesday) of the KACD Convention. Please note that the number of applicants was down this year so Ms. Barrick is asking the district offices help get the word out to their local schools about the availability of these scholarships.

The auxiliary auction will take place on Monday night of the convention. Donated items are still being accepted. The auction is the means of generating the majority of the money that is used for the scholarship fund. The auxiliary breakfast will be held on Tuesday morning.

Ms. Barrick stated that the president and treasurer positions will be up for re-election this year. She went on to say that she would like to step down from her current position as president but will, if necessary, continue for another year, possibly two.

The traditional Monday afternoon craft/project that the auxiliary hosts for the ladies will not take place at this year's convention.

Ms. Barrick circulated a picture of how this year's quilt will look as a finished product. A special thanks to the Breckinridge County District Office for taking on the task of sewing/piecing the quilt blocks together. She encouraged everyone to stop by the auxiliary table at the convention and make a donation and receive a ticket to become eligible for the quilt drawing.

### **2015 KACD State Convention - University Plaza Holiday Inn, July 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>**

**Agenda** - Director Kim Richardson, DOC, began by referencing a "working draft" of the convention schedule (copies distributed) and noted that the only time remaining open is Monday morning. Invitations to the Governor nominees and Commissioner of Agriculture nominees will be sent out once next week's primary election results are determined. President David Rowlett stated that Mr. Warren Beeler, with the KY Department of Ag, is scheduled to be the speaker at the Supervisor's Leadership Breakfast. Ms. Richardson reported that she has issued a request to Mr. Jeff Nalley concerning his availability to be a speaker but has not yet received a response from him.

Ms. Richardson stated that both she and Assistant Director Johnna McHugh are working out the details for some educational break-out sessions for those who do not wish to attend the Soil Health Forum. Also, Ms. Richardson has been speaking with Mr. Ted Jessup about putting together a session addressing the unique needs of the watershed conservancy districts. She added that since the rooms are already paid for per this year's contract, then they should be put to a profitable use.

**Registration** - Ms. Richardson next distributed copies of a draft of the convention registration form. She reviewed each ticket price as listed on the form pointing out that the cost of transportation for the Lee Robey Dairy Farm Tour was still open-ended.

The bus rental fee two (2) years ago was nine hundred and fifty dollars (\$950) per bus. And there would be a need for at least two (2) buses which would accommodate one hundred and twelve (112) persons. It is to be noted that this tour would not be included in the registration fee but would be offered at an additional cost. Ms. Richardson suggested listing the tour on the registration form as a "first come, first serve" offering to insure maximum use of the buses. The estimated additional cost for those who wish to participate with the tour would be twenty dollars (\$20).

Ms. Richardson asked, since KACD will be hosting the Leopold Award on Tuesday, if the board would like the meal ticket price to remain the same. After it was affirmed that the ticket price would cover the cost of the meal President Rowlett stated it should remain unchanged. She next asked about the additional number of attendees that the Leopold Award would bring in. President Rowlett estimated there would be between fifty (50) to seventy (70) extra attendees and ended by saying he felt fifty (50) would be a good representative number. Ms. Richardson stated that she would like to get the registration forms out as soon as possible, selecting Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup> as a target date.

President Rowlett asked the members to remind their districts not to reserve rooms only to back out just prior to the convention as was the case two (2) years ago.

Displays - Ms. Richardson stated that information for the conservation districts to have a display would be included in with the registration form mailings.

Corporate Sponsorships - President Rowlett stated that solicitation letters were mailed out a month ago to past sponsors, with a special request sent to Farm Bureau, but no replies have been received at this point. He did report that Mr. Jeff Rice has agreed to a sponsorship of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) for the Supervisor's Leadership Breakfast. Ms. Richardson reported that Tichenor and Associates, the auditing firm for the conservation districts, inquired in January about sponsoring this year's convention. Their sponsorship last year was for one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

Southeast NACD Hall of Fame - President David Rowlett reported that only one (1) nomination has been submitted to him. It was from Mr. Jeff Rice who nominated Mr. Dan Ellison. President Rowlett opened up the floor for any additional nomination(s). After brief discussion Mr. David Cowherd nominated Mr. Jerry Perry. President Rowlett called for a vote with the result being: **Motion carried.** Ms. Kim Richardson reminded President Rowlett that Mr. Rice needs to fully complete the nomination form.

Report on Area Spring Meetings - *Area 1:* Mr. Rod Murphy and Ms. Kim Richardson presented the report. Mr. Murphy began by stating that the original meeting had to be rescheduled due to severe winter weather. There were approximately fifty people in attendance which was less than normal. Ms. Richardson stated that it was a good meeting with no new resolutions presented. Mr. Randy McCowan of Calloway Co. was elected as the new Area 1 Director to replace outgoing Director Rod Murphy. Mr. Murphy appointed Ms. Dee Beshear as Mr. McCowan's alternate after opening up the floor for nominations/discussion for this position but having no name presented. Mr. Murphy ended his report by stating how appreciative he was for having served on this board.

*Area 2:* Mr. Ted Jessup presented the report. Mr. Jessup began by stating that they too had to reschedule their meeting due to winter weather but still had a nice turnout and a good meeting. No elections were held. And no resolutions were presented.

*Area 4:* Ms. Kim Richardson presented the report (this is Joe Paul Mattingly's area). Ms. Richardson began by stating there was talk of a resolution calling for further explanation from NRCS regarding "concentrated animal feeding operations." At this point Ms. Lacey Gawl will be speaking with interested parties of Area 4 and will hopefully answer all of their concerns. This was a well-attended meeting.

*Area 5:* Mr. Allan Bryant presented the report. Mr. Bryant began by stating that this meeting was also rescheduled due to winter weather. The meeting was held in Maysville and was well attended with approximately sixty (60) persons on hand. A resolution was not presented. But there was a presentation and much discussion regarding Ag Districts. The Campbell Co. District believes that once a landowner applies and is accepted as an Ag District then that landowner is "locked-in" for the entire allotted/designated five (5) year period. The Campbell Co. District has sent in an opinion to the KY Attorney General's Office regarding this and is currently awaiting the AG's ruling. While the KRS addressing this is vague, Director Richardson stated that it is DOC's opinion that since it is voluntary program to participate in then it should be equally voluntary to withdraw from the same. Being more specific she stated that DOC does not put any restrictions on the participating landowner's deed nor does DOC pay landowners for land development, therefore DOC cannot require the landowner to remain in the program for the entire five (5) year period. Ms. Richardson added that since there are no penalties listed for early withdrawal from the program then this reinforced the stance for voluntary withdrawal. Ms. Richardson went on to state that

over four thousand (4,000) landowners are currently participating in the program but she expressed concern that if the landowners are made to commit to a full five (5) year obligation, no matter the circumstances, then she would fully expect a drastic drop in the number of participants. Ms. Richardson stated that both she and Ms. Barbara Pauley, staff attorney, have been answering questions presented by the KY AG's Office regarding this issue. President David Rowlett interjected that he saw nothing that would be gained if landowners were locked-in for the entire five (5) year period.

It was noted by Ms. Richardson, after a discussion brought up the matter, that Mr. Ron McCormick would be re-introducing a resolution to prevent the sale of honeysuckle and various other invasive species. Mr. Allan Bryant stated this was being brought about due to one of the nature preserves in his district being overrun by this type of vegetation. Mr. Bryant did inform Mr. McCormick that he needed to be "species specific" before the resolution would be given serious consideration.

*Area 8:* Mr. Lenville Martin presented the report. Mr. Martin stated that it was a good meeting with between forty (40) to fifty (50) attendees. The Martin County Judge was in attendance as was a representative from Hal Rodger's Prestonsburg Office.

*Area 9:* Mr. Orville Bennett presented the report. Mr. Bennett began by stating that there was a large turnout for this meeting which was held at Buckhorn State Resort Park. He stated that both Ms. Kim Richardson and a Buckhorn park employee gave excellent presentations and that overall it was a good meeting.

Ms. Kim Richardson ended this portion of the meeting by stating that at this point in time there are no assembled resolutions to be presented at the upcoming state convention.

**Division of Conservation Report** - Director Kim Richardson, DOC, presented the report.

**KACD Standing Committees** - To date there have been two (2) Standing Committee Conference Calls. On Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, the Conservation Programs Conference Call took place and on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Natural Resources Conference Call was conducted. The District Outlook Conference Call is scheduled for tonight. Information packets have been sent out so please keep these accessible for use when your respective call(s) comes in. The schedule and topics for the remaining conference calls are as follows:

Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> - Forestry

Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> - Education

Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> - Legislative

Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> - Research

Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> - Public Information and Awards

Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> - PL 566

Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> - Soil Stewardship

(Start times may vary so please check prior to your meeting)

Ms. Richardson expressed her appreciation to the board for working with the DOC field reps and getting these conference calls set up so quickly. Mr. Rod Murphy commended Field Representative Jamie Ponder for contacting all concerned parties with a helpful reminder just prior to the scheduled meeting. President David Rowlett indicated that these meetings need to be scheduled for earlier in the year to accommodate the needs of farmers. He suggested the months of February and March. Mr. David Cowherd made the motion to have all of the Standing Committee Conference Calls scheduled prior to April 15<sup>th</sup> each year beginning with the 2016 calendar year. Mr. Kevin Jeffries seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

**Envirothon** - Ms. Richardson began by stating what a unique year 2015 has become. Historically ten (10) teams have been qualifying for the right to be state champions. However, this year's Envirothon State Competition will host a substantial increase in that number with eighteen (18) teams qualifying. This increase is an indicator of how well these students have been progressing and increasing in environmental knowledge and is something that KACD and DOC can be proud of. Ms. Richardson also touted another pleasing statistic by saying she could name at least twenty (20) former Envirothon students who have went

on to pursue environmental studies in higher education. This increase of participating teams will mean changes for this year's event, mostly in the schedule. The competition will begin earlier, at 10:00 a.m., tomorrow morning (May 13<sup>th</sup>) in Jabez, KY. There will be an added cost with the necessity for an additional meal. Ms. Richardson extended thanks to the many district offices and numerous Envirothon sponsors for their donations towards the gift bags which each participant will receive. She concluded by saying that at Envirothon's inception she had a goal of having fifty (50) teams register for the program. This year's numbers came close to accomplishing this with forty-four (44) teams registering.

Ms. Richardson ended the DOC report by stated that the KY General Assembly did in fact pass the funding for the State Cost Share program. She thanked the conservation districts and KACD for their combined efforts to help ensure this outcome. As a follow-up to Ms. Richardson's comments Vice- President Shane Wells made the suggestion that a letter expressing KACD's gratitude be sent to the Farm Bureau Board for the work of their lobbying team which listed the passing of this funding as one of their legislative priorities. Vice-President Wells also suggested a letter of appreciation be sent to Mr. Roger Thomas.

Mr. Ted Jessup expressed his appreciation to Director Kim Richardson, DOC, for allowing the field reps to attend district meetings and for announcing plans for their being in attendance at the next two (2) meetings. Ms. Richardson expressed her gratitude to Administrative Branch Manager Joe Adcock, DOC, who does a fantastic job in handling/tracking DOC's budget. When Mr. Adcock informed Ms. Richardson of the money remaining in the travel budget she felt it expedient to have the field reps be present at these meetings. This will be extremely beneficial for the reps and the district office staff as they are in preparation for the upcoming annual financial reports (AFRs). Also, this opportunity for their increased attendance will be advantageous to DOC's two (2) latest hired field reps, Mr. Andrew Laswell and Mr. Jeff Chandler, who have not yet been through the AFR process.

#### **Agency Comment**

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Assistant State Conservationist Reed Cripps, NRCS, presented the report.

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is back with a request for proposals which are due by July 8, 2015. Mr. Cripps said he could be contacted by anyone requiring any assistance regarding this program.

Some upcoming Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) events will be held in Central and Eastern KY. These two (2) events have been given presidential level status (i.e. "high dollar").

NRCS field staff is currently busy putting together EQIP and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts. They are seeing a large increase in the CSP applications due to the recent promotion of soil health.

NRCS has now entered into agreements with several counties which include: Breckinridge, Calloway, Johnson, and Marshall. Paperwork is currently underway for Ballard as well as beginning the process with Owen. These are 50/50 agreements. Mr. Cripps stated if a district would be interested in pursuing this then please contact State Conservationist Karen Woodrich. When asked if it were possible for two (2) counties to join together to share the district's costs for these agreements Mr. Cripps replied that this was actually encouraged.

A Link Pass Card will be required to access NRCS computers beginning September 30, 2015. There are approximately fifteen (15) of these cards that need to be picked up by district employees. The cards are located in offices in Lexington, Nashville (TN), and Benton (IL). When questioned Mr. Cripps explained that since this is dealing with a security issue the district employee will have to go, in person, and pick up their individual card. This is so that their identification may be verified, adding that an electronic fingerprint will be taken.

Kentucky Department for Natural Resources - Deputy Commissioner Sandy Gruzesky, DNR, presented the report. Ms. Gruzesky began by speaking about the new regulations for the Division of Oil and Gas (DOG) brought about by recent legislation. There now is a provision for abandoned, above ground, storage tank removal. There are established regulations already in place regarding underground tank removal. The goal of this regulation is to provide a financial means for removing abandoned storage tanks in situations where the actual tank owner cannot be located or will not take the responsibility for the removal costs. Upon answering questions Commissioner Steve Hohmann, DNR, pointed out that a funding source for this program has not yet been determined. The newly passed regulation merely creates the necessity for a fund and for DOG to administer that fund once it is established. At present, DNR along with entities from the Oil and Gas Work Group will be exploring various options as a means for this funding. A web search for KY Senate Bill 86 will yield additional information regarding this new legislation. There are approximately four thousand two hundred (4,200) of these tanks located throughout the state.

An Update on the Water Quality Trading Pilot Project: Ms. Gruzesky attended an event on April 13<sup>th</sup> in which this project received a prestigious award from the US Water Alliance. This pilot project is being broadly viewed as a new way of approaching nutrient management where private entities' pay farmers/landowners to install and maintain management practices for an agreed upon time.

There is going to be a Gulf Hypoxia Task Force Public Meeting held in Columbus, OH on May 20, 2015. Ms. Gruzesky stated she will be linking in to the offered webcast. She will make available all pertinent information to anyone interested in participating with this event.

Farm Service Agency - Mr. Bob Finch and Ms. Faye Brown presented the report.

FSA is wrapping up the sign-up for the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Program. The next big deadline, introduced by the recently passed Farm Bill, facing farmers who have crop insurance and want the subsidy of their crop insurance premiums is to file an AD 1026 form by June 1<sup>st</sup>. FSA is currently working through a recently provided list by attempting to make contact with those farmers who are eligible but have not yet filed.

An ongoing effort to hire much needed staff is underway. FSA, like NRCS, has recently lost valuable personnel due to retirements with a high number of current employees who are eligible to retire.

There are approximately two hundred and sixty three thousand three hundred (263,300) acres currently enrolled in conservation programs in KY under the Conservation Reserve Program. Approximately twenty seven thousand (27,000) of these acres are due to expire this September.

FSA has processed and approved approximately eleven thousand (11,000) acres in KY (mostly in the western portion of the state) for environmental benefits. The target for this initiative is some of KY's declining bird populations.

A recent development for FSA is the implementation of the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) which "provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for implementing emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought." Madison and Estill County have already applied for assistance owing to recent flood damage. These are the only two counties which have requested assistance to date but Ms. Faye Brown did say that she was anticipating additional requests would be forthcoming due to all the recent flooding and tornados that have occurred in Kentucky.

University of Kentucky - Dr. Steve Higgins was not in attendance.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture - Mr. Steve Kelly was not in attendance.

Division of Forestry - Ms. Leah MacSwords, Director, was not in attendance however Deputy Commissioner Sandy Gruzesky, DNR, did report that DOF has a regulation package being finalized to go to LRC concerning the "Bad Actor Bill." This legislation will provide much needed clarification addressing those in the logging industry who are not in compliance with established laws and the consequences of these actions.

KACDE - Ms. Leslie Fourqurean was not in attendance. Director Kim Richardson, DOC, in answering a question presented by President David Rowlett, clarified that the Master Conservationist signs are received from Farm Credit Services. President Rowlett stated that he had heard that KACDE was having these signs made and then selling the same to the district offices thereby creating a conflict of interest. Ms. Richardson stated she was unaware of this occurring but would find out tomorrow when she meets with Ms. Fourqurean. Assistant Director Johnna McHugh, DOC, interjected that she had heard that some of the individual districts were having these signs made up. Ms. Richardson made it clear that any district office could receive the signs through DOC, adding that all of DOC's field reps had a supply of signs in their possession.

Other Business - President David Rowlett gave a brief overview of the recent Washington D.C. Fly-In stating that Ms. Kim Richardson, Mr. Shane Wells, Mr. Allan Bryant, Mr. Lenville Martin, and he made the trip and visited all of Kentucky's representatives' and senators' offices. They mainly spoke with aides who work in the offices but did speak directly with Congressman Andy Barr and Congressman Thomas Massie. While it was a fast paced and arduous trip, departing Tuesday morning and arriving back home Wednesday evening, President Rowlett stated that it was a very productive trip with time well invested. Ms. Richardson pointed out an item of note concerning Congressman Massie who was endeared to the group due to

his having won the KACD sponsored writing contest while a student in school. President Rowlett added that one of Congressman Hal Roger's staff members was also a previous KACD essay contest winner.

**Adjournment** - A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. David Cowherd. Motion seconded by Mr. Lenville Martin. **Motion carried**, meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

**Next Board Meeting** -

The remainder of the 2015 Meeting Schedule is as follows:

July 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> at the KACD Convention in Bowling Green

September 8<sup>th</sup>

November 10<sup>th</sup>

*Unless otherwise indicated all meetings will be held at 2 Hudson Hollow Road (DNR Building) in Frankfort beginning at 9:30 a.m.*